



2012 Pre-Wildfire Season Press Conference

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer
Wednesday, April 11, 2012

**Welcome, everybody ... and thank you ALL for
being here today.**

**It's hard to believe that next month will mark
ONE YEAR since the **Wallow Fire** began its
march across eastern Arizona...**

**... SCORCHING 840 square miles of land and
personal property...**

... And BURNING its way into our memories.

Of course, we haven't forgotten about the [Horseshoe Two Fire](#), which charred nearly 350 square miles of land in southeastern Arizona.

Or the [Monument Fire](#), which terrorized southern Arizona while burning dozens of homes in the canyons near Sierra Vista.

Each of these fires left blackened countryside and heartache in its wake ...

... EACH was human-caused ...

... and EACH was preventable.

All told, Arizona fires last year destroyed more than ONE HUNDRED homes and businesses...

... Threatened another 9,000 structures ...

... Evacuated 14,000 people from their homes ...

... And BURNED more than ONE MILLION acres.

Wildfire season is upon us yet again.

In the coming months, Arizona is likely to experience high temperatures and strong winds.

Without enough rainfall, we will again have conditions favorable for damaging wildfires.

These fires are an inevitable and natural part of living in the West ...

... But every year doesn't HAVE to be like last year.

We don't HAVE to experience another [Wallow](#) ... or another [Horseshoe Two](#).

We DO have to be prepared.

This morning, I received a wildfire briefing from

... [State Forester Scott Hunt](#) ...

... [Arizona Director of Emergency Management](#)

[Lou Trammel](#) ...

... and [Clay Templin](#), [Deputy Supervisor of the](#)

[Tonto National Forest](#).

I'd like to share just a glimpse of what I learned.

First – we DO expect an active fire season in southeastern Arizona...

AND – due to below-average snowfall this winter – there is a potential for LARGE fires in the high country.

Thankfully, recent snows in northern Arizona have reduced the risk of fire in some areas.

But as our days grow warmer, that snow is rapidly melting ... and fire danger is very much on the rise in portions of our State.

It's not all bad news, though.

Fire weather specialists predict less high wind this spring and summer, potentially meaning fewer Red Flag Days.

This is promising news – as we know from last year how CRUCIAL high winds are in the spread of wildfire.

We can't stop nature from running its course.

We CAN, however, be prepared to CURB the potential for large, devastating fires like the [Wallow](#).

As always, keeping the public and our firefighters safe is the NUMBER ONE PRIORITY during wildfire season.

And, I assure you, the State of Arizona is actively and COOPERATIVELY working to fulfill that priority.

That is why in just a moment I will sign the [State Forester's preparedness request](#) ...

This will allow the State to begin READYING ... and PRE-POSITIONING ... extra firefighting resources for the upcoming season.

Resources such as air tankers...

- Tactical surveillance aircraft...**
- DPS and National Guard helicopters...**
- And TWELVE twenty-person inmate firefighting crews... just to name a few –**

This will help ensure that our firefighters have the resources they need to respond at a moment's notice ...

... so that they can contain small fires BEFORE they grow into monsters.

I will now sign the State Forester's preparedness request ...

Signing request

On March 29, I signed into law [SB 1075](#) – legislation that requires the State Forester to annually develop – and implement – a **COMPREHENSIVE plan for the deployment of firefighting resources.**

Meanwhile, the Forester and I will CONTINUE working hand-in-hand with State, Federal and local units – as well as with partnering firefighting agencies ... some of whom are here with us today.

We will continue working ...

... to SHARE equipment and personnel across jurisdictional lines ...

... and to ensure a SAFE and EFFICIENT response to wildland fires WHEREVER and WHENEVER they break out.

After all, wildfire knows no boundaries.

Of course, THE BEST approach is to prevent fires BEFORE they start.

That's where the public comes in ... because we know that the vast majority of wildfires are caused by humans.

While outside this spring and summer enjoying all the natural beauty that our state has to offer, I ask that Arizonans please take today's warnings to heart.

Be careful with fire. Observe all local, state and federal restrictions. Use common sense.

Together, we can reduce the threat of wildfire in the Arizona outdoors.

I want to thank Scott, Lou and Clay ... and their teams ... who work to keep Arizonans safe.

And, of course, I'm grateful to ALL of the firefighters who put themselves in harm's way in order to protect all of us and our beautiful state.

For everything you do, we truly cannot thank you enough.

Now, I'll be joined by Arizona State Forester Scott Hunt ...

